

**CLARK COUNTY
CLEAN WATER COMMISSION
Meeting Notes**

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

6:30 – 8:30 P.M.

Camas Police Station

2100 NE 3rd Avenue, Camas

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Present

Tim Crawford, Robert Even, Bill Owen, Patty Page, Art Stubbs

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Absent

Susan Rasmussen, Virginia van Breemen, Ron Wilson

Clark County Staff

Cary Armstrong, Ken Lader, Earl Rowell, Ron Wierenga

Public

Mike Kerbs, Rick LeBlanc

Call to Order

Introduction

The members of the Clark County Clean Water Commission, the public, and Clark County staff introduced themselves. The meeting was then called to order.

A quorum was achieved.

Agenda and material review

The packet includes:

- 1) 2/1/06 Clean Water Commission Meeting Agenda
- 2) 1/4/06 Clean Water Commission Meeting Notes
- 3) Memo from the Board of County Commissioners revising the appointment process for boards and commissions
- 4) Boundary Review Board article
- 5) Letter from Art Stubbs to the BOCC requesting reappointment of Bill Owen and Robert Even
- 6) Clean Water Program Project & Activity Reports
- 7) Information about the EPA's Sole Source Aquifer Protection Program
- 8) Letter of resignation from Anne Jackson
- 9) Revised Bylaws

Approval

The 1/4/06 meeting notes were approved as written.



Communications with the Public

The Board of County Commissioners contacted program staff regarding the new policy for selecting members of public commissions (see packet item #3).

Mr. Owen relayed a request from Mr. Dvija Michael Bertish of the Rosemere Neighborhood Association for the Commission to write a letter of support for the Sole Source Aquifer Petition to the EPA. Mr. Owen will discuss it later in the meeting.

Public Comments

Mr. Kerbs and Mr. LeBlanc live along Salmon Creek. They are sportsmen and use trails frequently. They have noticed that water in Salmon Creek does not look very healthy. Mr. Kerbs has read a study by the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, and spoken to Gary Bock of WSU Extension, Jeff Whittler of Clark Public Utilities, and Ron Wierenga of Clark County. Mr. Kerbs asked if any citizen groups have already worked on rehabilitation of the Salmon Creek watershed.

Mr. Rowell stated that studies of the area in the 80s and 90s proposed solutions that were more costly than the public was willing to pay. Mr. Owen: how was it determined that the public didn't want to pay? Mr. Rowell: public hearings. Mr. Stubbs: what projects were so expensive? Mr. Rowell: several restoration projects, regional stormwater facilities in the lower watershed, and implementation of increased regulation. Mr. Lader: high price tags are common for comprehensive, proactive solutions to surface water pollution. This is in contrast to the lower levels of funding usually available to the County.

Mr. Kerbs stated that he has contacted members of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council in Oregon. The basin has similar characteristics, including length, urbanization, and health issues. He and Mr. LeBlanc would like to start a citizen watershed council for the Salmon Creek basin that would work with the Clean Water Commission, Clark Public Utilities, Fish and Wildlife, Washington State University, and the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board. The council would assist with rehabilitation, stream monitoring and other actions. Mr. Kerbs indicated that the council would seek grant funding.

Mr. Kerbs asked how the Commission would view a watershed council for Salmon Creek. Mr. Owen and Ms. Page: we would be happy to see it. Mr. Stubbs suggested incorporating it into the Watershed Stewards program. Mr. Kerbs: the council might use similar methods but would be independent.

Mr. Kerbs asked if the various agencies and stakeholders already communicate and coordinate actions.

Mr. Wierenga: the county has few basin or stream-specific citizen groups; however Friends of the East Fork is a good model. A citizen group can require significant resources. The Johnson Creek Watershed Council in Oregon is funded by the state and has several paid staff.

Mr. Wierenga: the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership is discussing the formation of a watershed council for the tributaries to Vancouver Lake. Mr. Jim Gladson of Public Works offered to answer questions about the process of forming a watershed council. Mr. Kerbs: one book on the subject recommends getting sponsorship by another council. The founder of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council recommended incorporation, obtaining non-profit status, and involving all stakeholders.

Mr. Stubbs asked where a volunteer group could get started. Mr. Lader responded that education and outreach to property owners and businesses in the watershed might do the most good.

Mr. Armstrong asked what Mr. Kerbs would like from the Clean Water Commission. Mr. Kerbs: 1) to know that efforts to form a watershed council will be helpful and non-duplicative and 2) to identify Clean Water Commissioners who would like to help.

Old Business

Bylaws

Mr. Owen: a few additional changes have been proposed for the bylaws since the last meeting. All proposed changes are included in the packet. The Commission will vote at the next regular meeting.

Proposed Annexation

No new discussion.

Capital Improvement Subcommittee Update

Mr. Crawford relayed a request from Mr. Jerry Barnett, the project manager of the Whipple Creek Stormwater Basin Planning Project, that all Clean Water Commissioners participate in a newly forming group for the ranking and selection of stormwater capital improvement projects. Four evening meetings will be scheduled from April through September. Mr. Rowell: the meetings will be facilitated by Mr. Jim Gladson, the Public Works Public Information Officer. Mr. Lader: the Transportation Improvement Committee uses the same process for project selection.

Those who will commit to attending all four sessions should contact Mr. Crawford. The following Commissioners expressed interest: Mr. Stubbs, Mr. Owen, and Mr. Even. Ms. Page may commit when she knows the dates of the sessions.

Mr. Lader: the group will help create a comprehensive plan for stormwater capital improvements, including projects that currently lack funding, so that the county can move quickly to construct vital projects when funding becomes available.

Mr. Owen wondered if this group will end up ranking stormwater capital improvement projects instead of the Clean Water Commission.

Curtin Creek Enhancement Project Update

Mr. Lader: The project is located at NE 99th Street near 82nd Avenue, in the Salmon Creek watershed. The bid advertisement will appear this week. The contractor should start construction in April.

The total cost of the project is \$3.8 million, and it will take two years to construct. Mr. Owen asked for the Engineer's Estimate for construction; Mr. Lader will find out. Mr. Rowell noted that \$2.6 million is from the 2005-06 budget and \$1.27 million is from the 2007-08 budget.

Mr. Lader: the creek is a wide, deep man-made ditch that runs south to north across the site, which is swampy. The existing channel will be left in place for the first year of construction while the facility, the low flow channel, and the bypass channel are constructed on either side of it. Near the end of the project, flow will be diverted into the new facility.

Facilities three and four will improve water quality. Facility four will take water from 99th Street and 72nd Avenue. Facility three will take water from the St. Johns road project. Unused capacity will be sold to developers. Mr. Rowell: the Road Fund will buy back any unused capacity, if any, within 10 years. A maintenance fee is included in the project, too.

Mr. Lader indicated that water travels through the site in about 20 minutes presently, but will take about 3.5 hours when the facility is constructed. The facility will slow the water velocity and will provide habitat. It drains into the Costco mitigation area, which drains into Salmon Creek.

Mr. Owen: how will the facility help lower water temperature in Salmon Creek, and what other 303(d) listings does it address? Mr. Lader: shade, including from willow in low water areas, will reduce the rate at which water temperature rises as it pools or meanders through the site. Mr. Wierenga: the TMDLs in Salmon Creek are for turbidity and fecal coliform. Detention areas will address both. Curtin Creek is on the 303(d) list in Category 4a for fecal coliform, and it is covered under Salmon Creek's TMDL for that parameter. The downstream monitoring station occasionally records high levels of fecal coliform, and the facility will have the capacity to reduce that pollutant. Curtin Creek is on the 303(d) list for pH and for dissolved oxygen, both in Category 5. [Factual note: it is also on the 303(d) list for ammonia and for temperature, both in Category 1.] The creek has a fairly low temperature, however plantings should provide additional improvement. Mr. Lader: during rain events, when more highly polluted water overflows the low flow channel into the flat areas, sediment will drop out as water returns to the banks, providing good water quality treatment. The ponds will remove sediment. Mr. Wierenga: the facility should provide marginal benefit for nitrate removal through ponding and wetland uptake. The facility preserves the watershed's innate capabilities of capturing and infiltrating water in high flow events.

Mr. Owen: some of the ponds are too wide for trees to shade. Mr. Lader: yes, the open water ponds will not be fully shaded or planted with aquatics. The flat areas will be shaded with willow. Mr. Wierenga: will there be ponds or open water during the summer? Mr. Lader: no, water will flow in the low flow and occasionally in the bypass channels during summer. Water will pool in the ponds during summer rain events but will slowly infiltrate and drain, eliminating any standing water. Mr. Owen: will trees be planted along the low flow channel? Mr. Lader: yes.

Mr. Stubbs: what type of maintenance is required for this facility? Mr. Lader: the plants require significant maintenance for several years. The sediment cell must be dredged of silt occasionally.

Mr. Stubbs: will residents from the neighboring subdivisions be educated about the project? Mr. Lader: the adjacent property owners are aware of the project through right-of-way discussions. Mr. Stubbs: will the facility be accessible when it is finished? Mr. Lader: it will be fenced and locked. Mr. Rowell: limiting access protects the plants and helps limit the County's liability.

Mr. Owen: what about the temperature issue? Mr. Wierenga: at a minimum, we will monitor temperature since it is a concern with open standing water. The area is fairly sandy, and it drains effectively. We have several years of data from a continuous temperature gauge at 139th, about a mile and a half downstream from the site. I will install a turbidity sensor for continuous monitoring during construction.

Mr. Lader: the Thomas Wetland site is a good example of the density of the plantings.

Mr. Stubbs: I hate to see a project like this just sit there with a cyclone fence around it. Mr. Lader: there are some effective approaches to allowing public access. Mr. Stubbs: school classes that are studying water issues and water monitoring? Mr. Lader: that is possible. Mr. Stubbs: an adopt-a-wetland-type program with monitoring? Mr. Wierenga: people could be involved in planting. Mr. Lader: using volunteers for the plantings would disqualify the site for wetland mitigation credit and cause difficulties with the permits. Mr. Wierenga: yes, planting by volunteers would have to be over-and-above the necessary work. Mr. Stubbs: I want the neighbors to be aware of why the facility is necessary, what benefit they will receive, and how they can assist by reducing their own use of pollutants. Mr. Rowell: the education subcommittee could hold informational sessions for the neighbors with Mr. Gladson.

Ms. Page: which agencies issue permits? Mr. Lader: Clark County Community Development, the Army Corps of Engineers for working in a wetland boundary, Washington State Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and the Department of Ecology. Some agencies are at odds with one another. Mr. Wierenga: the stream is classed as salmon-bearing.

Mr. Owen: fecal coliform counts may increase as a result of increased presence of wildlife. Mr. Wierenga: we have baseline data, so we'll be able to compare.

2005 Annual Report

Mr. Owen asked the group to look at item #6 from the January packet, which is the 2004 Annual Report. The Commissioners agreed upon the following outline and writing assignments:

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction
- III. Role of Clark County Clean Water Commission (including education of CWC) – *Ms. Page*
- IV. Review of 2005 Action Plan Accomplishments – *Mr. Even*
- V. Evaluation of Clean Water Program Effectiveness – *Mr. Owen and Ms. Page*
- VI. Summary of Clean Water Program Revenue – *County staff*
- VII. Status of Incentive Program – *Mr. Stubbs*
- VIII. Summary of Public Comments – *Mr. Crawford*
- IX. 2006 Action Plan
- X. Recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners

Mr. Wierenga asked what criteria the Commissioners will use to write section V, Evaluation of Clean Water Program Effectiveness; previous annual reports have used a decision chart as the basis for evaluation. Mr. Stubbs: evaluating the education portion of the program is subjective. Ms. Page: evaluation of the education program can be quantifiable in some ways.

Mr. Owen: the evaluation should be more subjective of the program, though it would be nice to find a way to use the decision chart as a tool. Mr. Wierenga: using the decision chart from the 2001 Annual Report to evaluate the entire Clean Water Program stakes everything on water quality monitoring results.

Ms. Page: the Annual Report should reflect a layperson's point of view of the program.

Mr. Stubbs asked how educated the Commission feels on the goals and activities of the Clean Water Program. Mr. Crawford: comfortable. The Board of County Commissioners wants an evaluation of the program from us as *citizens* – not to duplicate the precise evaluative criteria provided by program staff.

Mr. Owen stated that all drafts should be prepared by the regular April meeting.

Budget Update

Mr. Rowell stated that the program is on budget (see Jan. item #9). The budget for capital has increased by \$2.5 million dollars for the Curtin Creek project. Mr. Owen asked why the percent expended for Administration and Coordination is at 26% rather than at 45%. Mr. Rowell: we're efficient. Mr. Owen: I thought that salaries would closely match the budget percent expended, but they do not. Mr. Rowell: the Office of Budget calculates salaries and benefits differently than we do, so the budget numbers sometimes do not match. In 2006, the cost of filing liens by the Treasurer's Office will increase.

New Business

Status of Stormwater Engineer III Position

Mr. Rowell stated that he and others interviewed a candidate last week. He is calling references now.

Mr. Owen: what about the other opening? Mr. Rowell: the process of changing the position from Engineer III to GIS Analyst has begun. He will let the Commission know when the position opens.

Sole Source Aquifer Support

Mr. Owen asked the Commission if it would like to fulfill Mr. Bertish's request to write a letter of support for the Sole Source Aquifer application to the EPA.

Mr. Stubbs: writing a letter like that is not the Commission's role. Mr. Owen: the Commission could recommend to the BOCC that it write a letter of support. Mr. Stubbs: I don't know enough about the group to support it at this point. Mr. Rowell: any letter would be due by May 1, 2006. Mr. Owen urged the Commissioners to read over the material from the EPA and form an opinion by the next meeting.

Mr. Rowell: the Sole Source Aquifer designation would have economic costs for the county government; construction or road projects that receive Federal funding would require an additional review by the EPA.

Other Items

Mr. Rowell asked the Commissioners to read the Project Activity Reports (packet item #6) before the next meeting.

Tabled until the next meeting: 2006 Discussion Topics, and Review of PARs / Big Board.

Mr. Armstrong invited the Commissioners to attend a volunteer appreciation banquet on March 9th at the Water Resource Education Center.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Clean Water Commission will be held on Wednesday, March 1, 2006 from 6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M. The location is the Clark County Public Works Operations Conference Room B-1, 4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver.

Respectfully Submitted,
Trista Kobluskie